



FACT Sheet

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & HEALTH SERVICES



Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

CA Children's Administration

August, 2014

What is Foster Care and How Can I Become Licensed?

Foster care is designed to be a temporary living situation for children and youth who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, abandonment, or the death of their caregivers.

Foster parents and foster families take children into their homes and often into their hearts, creating a safe and secure place to grow.

To be considered for a license, an applicant must:

- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Have sufficient income to support themselves without relying on foster care payments.
- Discipline children in a positive manner without the use of physical punishment.
- Provide supervision appropriate to the age or specific behavior of the child as outlined by the social worker.
- Complete training:
 - First Aid/CPR
 - Blood Borne Pathogens
 - Licensing Orientation
 - Pre-service Training

Any adult living in a potential foster home must:

- Complete a background clearance check with the FBI and Washington State Patrol.
- Submit tuberculosis tests dated within the last year.
- Submit Tdap and/or DTap for all household members if taking placements of children 2 years or younger.

Youth ages 16 to 18 in the household must complete a Washington State Patrol check.

What Kind of Home Can Become a Foster Home?

Foster families may rent or own their homes. Any home can be a foster home if:

- It is reasonably clean, safe, in good repair, and has adequate space.
- Poisons and cleaning solutions are kept out of reach of children.
- Pools have a fence designed to discourage climbing and have a locking gate.
- Hot tub and spa areas are locked when they are not in use.
- Medications, including vitamins and herbal remedies, are in their original containers and in locked storage.
- All firearms, ammunition, and other weapons are kept in locked containers.
- Ammunition is stored separate from weapons or locked in a gun safe.
- Smoke detectors are installed.
- Approved 2A10BC rated or larger all purpose (ABC) fire extinguisher is on hand.

Smoking IS NOT allowed in the living space of ANY home or facility caring for children or in ANY motor vehicles transporting children. Adults may smoke out doors away from children.



Frequently Asked Questions About Foster Parenting?

Can a single person be a foster parent?

Yes.

How long does it take to become licensed?

While it largely depends on how quickly you submit the required information and the FBI processing time, the goal is to complete the licensing process within 90 days of receiving your application.

How long would a foster child stay in my home?

It depends on the particular child and his/her parents' situation. Some children are in care a few days; others several months. Some children are adopted by their foster parents, or move on to an adoptive home when reunification with their parents is not possible.

What contact does a foster child have with his/her biological parents?

In order to maintain family ties when reunification is the goal, a visitation plan is established. Foster parents are expected to cooperate with the social worker and the court order to ensure the plan is followed. The location and time of the visits, as well as whether or not they are supervised, is worked out by the social worker. Visits could be in your home, if it is appropriate and you agree.

Can a foster child share a room with my child?

Yes. However, they must have a separate bed and children of the opposite sex can only share a room if they both are under six years of age.

Do I have a choice about the age and sex of the child?

Foster parents, in consultation with the licensor, can decide what sex and age range would be most suitable for their family.

Is there an age minimum?

You must be at least 21.

What are we told about the child before he/she is placed?

To the extent information is available and pertinent to the care of the child; specific information about each child will be shared with you. You have the right to ask any questions you think necessary.

Can we decline to take a child with a problem that we do not feel comfortable with?

Yes. Foster parents have the right to accept or decline a child offered for placement. Please remember all of our children are in a crisis.

Can I spank the foster child?

No. Foster parents are prohibited from using any form of physical punishment. Positive discipline, combined with warmth and caring, should be used to teach the child to conform to the standards of your family and our society.

Can we take the foster child with us on vacation?

Yes, with prior approval from the child's social worker.

Can we leave the foster child with a baby sitter?

Yes. The sitter needs to be at least 18 years old (with a few exceptions). Respite care might also be available to you. Please consult with the child's social worker.

Is there a problem with our having pets?

Generally not. We would be concerned if there were issues of safety, cleanliness, or health factors such as a child's allergies.

What financial help is available?

Reimbursement ranges from \$423.68 to \$1,377.60 per month based on the child's age and special needs.

Who Do I Contact For More Information?

Region 1N:	Melissa Fielding, Spokane	fieldmel@dshs.wa.gov	509.363.3443
Region 1S:	Maria Rivera, Yakima	riverma@dshs.wa.gov	509.225.6539
Region 2N:	Vickie Tupper, Everett	tuppevl@dshs.wa.gov	425.339.2961
Region 2S:	Elizabeth Brandt, Seattle	brandel@dshs.wa.gov	206.923.4936
Region 3N:	Charlotte Glen, Tacoma	glenchm@dshs.wa.gov	253.983.6132
Region 3S:	Myrna Bragg, Vancouver	Myrna.Bragg@dshs.wa.gov	360.993.7947

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